

## **Town Planner**

### **Definition:**

Administrative, professional and supervisory work related to the balanced, favorable, and sound economic use of land in the Town of Boxborough. The Planner acts as the chief inter-board liaison on land use matters of common interest, and develops practices and processes to assist and guide the public in bringing permit requests before the town to ensure smooth and open exchange of ideas, information and awareness among the land use boards in the performance of their duties and in their delivery of services to the public.

### **Distinguishing Characteristics:**

Works with the Planning Board, the Board of Selectmen, and related boards on matters pertaining to land use, and represents Boxborough on regional planning issues.

Performs responsibilities of a professional, administrative and supervisory nature requiring the exercise of judgment in solving varied, and often complex and unusual issues/problems. Work is analytical and requires evaluation and interpretation in order to make decisions and/or recommend appropriate course of action.

Contacts are with the general public, vendors, suppliers, contractors, Town officials, and State officials and requires the explanation, discussion and interpretation of work procedures and regulations. May require persuading, and selling others to a point of view. The position requires the employee to exercise courtesy, tact and diplomacy in order to maintain goodwill.

Supervises employees performing clerical and technical functions. Coordinates fulfillment of consulting engagements with applicable Town Board(s). Establishes department goals and prepares department budget for review/approval.

Errors of omission or commission could result in financial loss to the Town, failure to meet established deadlines, inappropriate land use that could be irreversible, or loss of goodwill that may result in the Town being viewed as unfriendly to economic development.

Maintains department-related confidential information.

Work is performed under mostly favorable office conditions. Some field visits are required where there could be exposure to outside weather elements.

Negligible physical effort required in performing the duties under typical office conditions. Work is basically office-type but may require non-sedentary duties involving moderate physical efforts.

**Examples of work:**

**Planning Board:**

Researches and recommends zoning bylaws to properly regulate development of the town.  
Oversees implementation and evolution of the Master Plan  
Prepares technical and administrative materials for public hearings.  
Develops, monitors and implements land use controls, including subdivision and zoning bylaws.

*Secondary Responsibilities:*

Participates in selected regional planning activities and forums.  
Other related Planning Board work, as required.

**Housing Board:**

Develops suitable inclusionary zoning proposals and other incentives in support of Boxborough's Affordable Housing Long Range Plan.  
Identifies and pursues external public grants and other financial assistance in support of affordable housing development on behalf of the town.  
Monitors legislative and legal developments related to affordable housing goals in Boxborough.

**Conservation Commission:**

Assists in the preparation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.  
Identifies planning practices and zoning bylaw mechanisms to support Boxborough's conservation and open space goals.  
In conjunction with the Board of Health, ensures Boxborough's zoning bylaws foster good maintenance and stewardship of watershed resources.  
Assists the Conservation Commission in the preparation of educational and technical materials and maps.

**Zoning Board of Appeals:**

Provides technical assistance regarding planning issues for public hearing matters that come before the ZBA.

**Board of Selectmen:**

Acts as inter-board project coordinator for town projects that require permitting.  
Serves as chief liaison to external professional development and land use consultants when required by projects of suitable scale.

**Regional Planning Support:**

Serves as liaison to adjacent towns to coordinate development projects and activities that straddle town boundaries or that are wholly in adjacent towns but potentially impact Boxborough.

Represents Boxborough in regional planning forums as directed by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board

Supervision Received

1. The Town Planner will work under the direction of the Planning Board.
2. The Planner will work under the administrative direction of the Town Administrator within policies established by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding.
3. The Planner must work harmoniously and in close cooperation with the Board of Selectmen, Building Department, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Housing Board, Public Works Department, and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Independent Action

1. Recommend priorities and procedures to achieve goals of favorable land use and goals set by the Planning Board.
2. Exercise initiative to develop and maintain contacts and communication with knowledgeable resources in the land use community.
3. Represent Boxborough in various regional land use planning meetings.

### Supervisory Action

1. Supervise support personnel (the equivalent of five or fewer full-time employees).
2. Coordinate fulfillment of consultant(s) statement-of-work engagements with applicable Town Board(s).

### Scope of Responsibility

1. Perform a varied number of complex tasks requiring considerable exercise of judgment and initiative within the guidelines established by local and state laws related to land use controls.
2. Errors could result in legal and/or monetary repercussions, cause delay, confusion, and adverse public relations.

## **DUTIES**

### **Duties – Professional/Planning**

Coordinates and integrates planning, zoning, and development issues that span the jurisdiction of multiple Town boards.

Creates and administers policies and procedures for the application and granting of permits for various types of construction and development in the Town.

Researches methods to achieve planning goals. Makes recommendations as to preferred approaches. Proposes and drafts amendments to the zoning bylaw and/or other controlling documents.

Provides professional, technical, and administrative support to the Planning Board to enable it to meet its statutory requirements.

Works with the Planning Board to ensure appropriate review, efficient processing, and sound decision making relative to all petitions, applications and proposals that fall under the Planning Board's jurisdiction.

Remains current on legislation, grant availability and general thinking on land use in the Commonwealth.

Prepares and submits grant applications as appropriate.

Acts as an informational/advisory resource to other Boards.

Manages the Town's GIS operations. Acts as GIS system administrator.

**Examples of Work – Professional/Planning:**

Works with the Planning Board to develop an integrated land use policy (including, but not limited to an open space preservation plan, economic development goals, traffic and circulation plan) that is consistent with current circumstances and community goals.

Recommends to the Planning Board legislative changes to the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Rules and Regulations that implement the town's land use policy; ensures compliance with state law, or improves efficiency/regulatory control over development projects.

Undertakes planning studies (e.g., traffic studies, demographic trends, aquifer boundaries, etc.) to identify existing and future land use issues; reports on projected "build-out" of the community for both residential and commercial land. Proposes possible solutions for land use issues identified in such planning reports.

Advises Town boards, officials, developers and others concerning the applicability, interpretation, intent and purpose of town land use regulations.

Consults to the Planning Board concerning creative and innovative methods of treating land use issues, e.g., development phasing, planned unit development and proactive open space preservation. Keeps apprised of state and federal legislation that could affect local planning programs and land development.

Consults with municipal planning officials in other communities as well as with regional and state planning agencies to coordinate town planning and zoning programs. Participates in regional planning opportunities. Plays a proactive role to minimize negative impacts and maximize opportunities for Boxborough arising from development in adjoining towns.

Monitors implementation of zoning, subdivision control, and other land use controls and related procedures; prepares proposed changes for Planning Board review and Town Meeting consideration.

Compiles statistics related to the Town's growth and development and prepares a summary annual report for the Town's Annual Report that quantifies and characterizes the Town's growth and development.

Maintains a library of pertinent reference materials.

Assists landowners, developers, and other interested parties seeking interpretation of the Town's zoning bylaw and the rules and regulations of the Planning Board; provides technical assistance to Town departments in planning and community development matters.

Represents the Planning Board in meetings and discussion with the public, community groups, developers and government officials.

Administers the subdivision control law, including the processing of preliminary and definitive plans (e.g., site plan review, special permits, scenic road hearings, etc.); prepares draft subdivision decisions for Planning Board review in conformance with state statutes.

Coordinates long-range community and regional planning for the Town, including implementation of the Master Plan and preparation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan; coordinates and advises town boards on issues pertaining to open space preservation plans, economic development goals, affordable housing strategies, and land use regulation and permitting.

Acts as project coordinator for town projects that require permitting.

Serves as the point-of-contact for all Town requests for GIS support. Provides GIS support as requested by town boards. Delegates GIS project assignments to in-house staff or outside consultants as workload dictates. Oversees all delegated project assignments. Assists other Town staff in developing their skills in the use of GIS. Attends training periodically to remain current on GIS system changes and capabilities.

Verifies DHCD housing inventory. Prepares housing certification report. Identifies and monitors availability of parcels for affordable housing. Recommends proposals for affordable housing solutions. Identifies and pursues grants and other forms of assistance in support of affordable housing development. Monitors legal and legislative developments related to affordable housing in Massachusetts. Participates in regional planning discussions for affordable housing goals.

Perform other position related duties as required.

### **Duties – Administrative**

Maintains and enhance data management and record keeping associated with or required by land-use issues.

Develops and administer Planning Board programs.

Prepares the annual departmental budget and the Annual Town Report for approval by the Planning Board.

Monitors Planning Board compliance with laws of the Commonwealth, including satisfaction of legal notification requirements and that required documents and reports are prepared and filed in a timely fashion.

Coordinates review of legal issues, under Planning Board direction, with Town Counsel with the approval of the Town Administrator.

Monitors implementation of zoning, subdivision control, and other land use controls and related procedures.

Prepares draft decisions for Planning Board review in conformance with statutes of the Commonwealth.

Prepares the Planning Board meeting agenda, furnishes supporting materials including draft decisions, and supervises the posting of meetings and public hearing notices in conformance with applicable statutes; coordinates the submission of required documents and the participation of interested parties in meetings and public hearings; attends meetings and provide technical assistance as required

**Examples of Work - Administrative:**

Develops and maintains appropriate information systems related to development applications, land use patterns, comparative practices, population and housing.

Responds to requests for information from general public regarding proposed zoning text, district changes, development trends, etc.

Prepares Requests for Proposals for using professional consultants for various planning projects.

Oversees and directs professional consultants hired by the town for such planning projects.

**Duties – General**

Works with Town boards to improve efficiency and regulatory control.

Attends all regularly scheduled meetings of the Planning Board, annual and special town meetings, and occasional site walks in the field under variable weather conditions unless excused by the Planning Board.

Makes presentations and reports at Planning Board meetings, annual and special town meetings, and at other town or regional meetings.

**RECOMMENDED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

**I – Education and Experience**

The town planner's duties require advanced knowledge and understanding of municipal and/or community planning, development and zoning issues equal to a Master's degree and two years of related experience or a Bachelor's degree and five or more years of related experience or any equivalent combination of education and experience. AICP Certification is preferred.

## **II – Knowledge, Ability and Skills**

Extensive knowledge of land use planning principles and practices, state and local land use legislation, procedures, codes, and standards. Ability to communicate effectively in oral, graphic and written form, and to establish harmonious working relationships with Town officials, governmental representatives, community groups, and the general public. Strong organizational skills. Aptitude and attention to details and accuracy. Ability to analyze problems, prepare reports and formulate recommendations concerning planning operations.

Strong working knowledge of statutes pertinent to zoning and land use, particularly MGL Ch 40A and 40B.

Working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint and Access; CADD application(s), GIS, GEO TMS, or similar database software.

Ability to read, understand and interpret technical specifications, blue-prints, zoning, subdivision control and other land use regulations and plot plans.

Ability to perform a varied number of complex tasks requiring considerable exercise of judgment and initiative within the guidelines established by local and state laws related to land-use controls.

## **III – Special Requirements**

A valid Massachusetts Class D Driver's License; attend evening meetings.

## **IV – Physical Requirements**

The physical demands listed are representative of those that must be met by the employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the job. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is required to talk, hear, and sit for extended periods. The employee is frequently required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls. Occasionally requires walking, standing, bending/stooping, reaching with hands and arms, and carrying/lifting (normally no more than 25 pounds). Must be able to gain access to construction sites. Some physical effort needed to walk over rough and uneven terrain.

The employee must have good vision to view computer screens, alpha and numeric information, graphic data, read reports and printouts for analytical purposes for extended time periods. Requires manual dexterity in combination with eye-hand coordination for efficient keyboard input, data entry and filing.

*The duties listed above are intended only as an illustration of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, or a logical assignment to the position. This position description does not constitute an*

*employment agreement between the Town and the employee and is subject to change by the Town as the needs of the Town and requirements of the job change.*

**Position description received by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_